

WILLIAM PATTERSON AND ALICE BOND ALEXANDER

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

William Patterson and Alice Bond Alexander

(1893 - )

(1893 - 1980)

Mr. Alexander and his late wife, both descendants of early missionary families and Punahou School graduates, were married in 1919 in Kohala where Mrs. Alexander had been teaching music at Kohala Girls' School which her grandfather, the Reverend Elias Bond, had founded in 1874. At that time, Mr. Alexander was employed at the experiment station of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association.

After their marriage, Mr. Alexander was employed by the Ewa Plantation to head their innovative research and crop control department. He then worked as a plantation administrator in Cuba for two years. From 1930 to 1936 he was assistant manager of Grove Farm Plantation on Kauai and was manager from 1936 until his retirement in 1953. With Bob Krauss he wrote the history of Grove Farm.

In their reminiscences, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander recall their families' history and way of life in the early days. Mr. Alexander also discusses his employment and the types of experiments he conducted on island plantations and describes conditions on those plantations.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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# INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM PATTERSON AND ALICE BOND ALEXANDER

At their Arcadia apartment, 1434 Punahou Street, 96822

In 1971

W: William P. Alexander

A: Alice B. Alexander

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

W: My family has its roots quite deep in the Hawaiian Islands. I myself was born on the mainland where my father was teaching in a university. And he returned to the Hawaiian Islands in the year 1900 when I was seven years old--that is, well over seventy years ago--and I was old enough to remember things pretty well as a small boy and I grew up in the islands and my business career has been here in the islands all this time, except for two years in Cuba.

M: Where did your father teach?

W: My father was teaching physics at the University of California and then came back to the Islands to practice his profession of a civil engineer. But my grandfather was a historian and had written a brief history of the Hawaiian Islands and I was kind of brought up in this atmosphere of interest in Punahou particularly because my grandfather had been president of Punahou. My father and mother both had gone to Punahou and I was headed for Punahou as a small boy in the second grade.

M: What were your grandparents' names? I have your parents' names but not your grandparents'.

W: My parents were Arthur C. [Chambers] Alexander and my mother was Mary [Elizabeth] Hillebrand.

M: And your grandparents?

W: My grandparents were William DeWitt Alexander; the grandmother was Abigail [Charlotte] Baldwin. I'm descended from the Baldwins and the Alexanders on one side and the Bishops--Artemas Bishop--on the other. Artemas Bishop came to the Hawaiian Islands in 1823 and the Baldwins

shortly after that and the Alexanders came in 1831.

M: Okay. They were all missionaries, right?

W: The three of them, yeh. Bishops, Alexanders and Baldwins were missionaries.

M: Did you know any of your grandparents?

W: I knew my grandmother Bishop. She lived with us. My grandfather and grandmother Alexander lived here on Punahou Street where the Christian Science Church is and they used to have me come down for lunch from Punahou once a week, so I got to know them a little better than I would have just when they came in to the family.

M: I see. Okay. So your father brought his family back here . . .

W: That's right. We arrived on the S.S. Sierra which was one of the Oceanic Steamship Company boats that went on to Australia and then came back here and San Francisco was on that route. Not a very large ship in those days and in December the usual winter weather, we had a rough trip and we were late in arriving. We didn't get in till midnight. I can remember arriving, that part of it. In those days they had hacks, a horse-drawn type of vehicle, and they brought us up to Punahou Street. I spent my first night here on Punahou Street right next door to Arcadia.

M: (chuckling) And so you sort of came back where you started, didn't you?

W: Yes, that's right.

M: What did your father do then after he got here? Who did he go to work for?

W: My father became self-employed as a civil engineer. In that profession he traveled all over the islands and had work. He used to take me with him quite often so I got to know the islands even as a young fellow. When I arrived here, Punahou Street--down at Beretania and Punahou--was the terminal of the Payne horse-drawn streetcars. So we'd take the streetcar from Punahou and Beretania downtown. And a branch went down Kalakaua to Waikiki, out to Kapiolani Park. That was the terminal of the streetcars out there. But it was only a few years after that--I've forgotten whether it was 1901 or '02--when the [electric] streetcars started to run. I can remember very plainly at that time we were living right near the Pleasanton [Hotel]

and the first streetcar came up Wilder--electric streetcar. And then the branch of that line went up Manoa Valley and my family purchased a lot and built a home in Manoa Valley. At that time Punahou was selling off their pasture and they called it College Hills. I notice that the home of the president of the university is called College Hills, where Mr. Atherton used to live. But this whole district--ours was one of the first houses to be built in College Hills around 1901.

M: That was in the area near where the Atherton home is?

W: A little further up the gulch. It was actually on what was then called Jones Street; now it's Alaula Way.

M: I see. What were some of the jobs that your father worked on? Can you remember?

W: Oh, I remember he had a big job on Hawaii surveying Pepee-keo Sugar Company. On Kauai he surveyed the old Hawaiian Sugar Company and on Maui he had quite a number of different jobs. I've forgotten just particular ones.

M: A lot of it was connected with the plantations?

W: Yes, and also with the development of new subdivisions. In Manoa Valley he surveyed and laid out Woodlawn tract and I remember helping him survey and lay out Woodlawn tract. That was just a cow pasture then. My father, in 1918, joined the new firm of American Factors which had been H. Hackfeld and Company before World War I. He headed their land department and was the head of their land department for roughly twenty-five years or more.

M: I see. Can you tell me something about your experiences at Punahou? What kind of school it was then.

W: When I went to Punahou the primary department was over in Bishop Hall. That's the building which is being torn down next year, I believe, and this is the building which will be replaced by a new building which is almost finished. My teacher was the famous Mary Winne. Jane Winne, her sister, lives in Arcadia now. Have you talked with her?

M: No. Mary Winne.

W: Mary Winne was my teacher but her sister lives here in Arcadia. Jane.

M: Jane. Can you spell the last name for me?

W: W-I-N-N-E.

M: Okay. How many children were there at Punahou in those days?

W: Well, when you come to think of it, it was pretty small. As I remember it, that second grade wasn't over twenty-five. It may have been a little bit over but I remember there weren't too many, you know. [Twenty-eight]

M: Uh huh. How far did the grades in the school go, only through high school?

W: They didn't have a kindergarten in the Punahou campus but I think there was a kindergarten down on Beretania Street opposite Central Union Church. Well, I'm not sure of that but Punahou was one to twelve [grades] in those days.

M: It went all the way through.

W: Yeh, yeh.

M: And so you went right through and graduated--was it 1912?

W: Yes, I graduated in 1912. Yes.

M: Who were some of the people that were there with you?

W: Yes, well, some of them went right through almost. See, I went through eleven grades. One of the ones that went right straight through with me that became quite famous because he's written so many songs and been in the community life was Alexander Anderson. His father was a dentist and their home was down on Keeaumoku and Beretania where the theater is now. And Alex's mother was a Young--that's the Young of the Young Hotel. Now some of the others that are living today of my classmates, I'd have to really look at the list to see those that really began with me. It's kind of hard, you know, to figure out the ones that began with me really all the way through.

M: Can you remember any stories, any exciting events?

W: Stories that went on in those days? Well, at that time I was what you might call a day-scholar and I spent a lot of time on the campus even so. And in those days there were only McKinley High School, Kamehameha and St Louis came in sometimes but our chief people to play against would be. . . . Then also they would make up teams but all our athletics were on the lower field at Punahou. I remember all these different famous athletes that went on to play at

Harvard and Yale and had their beginnings there at Punahou.

But I was always headed for Yale from the time I went to Punahou because I had a father and a grandfather and also, on the Baldwin side of the family, a great-grandfather that were Yale men. So there was only about one college that I was headed for. (Lynda chuckles)

You were thinking of some of the things that went on.

M: Yeh, just the, you know, funny things.

W: They always had the spring, of course--you know, Punahou spring up there--and there was a lily pond and one of the things that they would do for some persons was to give them the Punahou swing. They'd take their hands and their legs--two people--and throw them into the lily pond for some cause or another, usually just as a prank because a person had done or hadn't done something that they were interested in.

I'm looking at this list in the Punahou catalogue to see who might still be around that were in my class. Actually there're not very many. I see Lorna Jarrett here and I saw her in the elevator here the other day. I've forgotten her married name but we could look that up. She's a Desha. [Mrs. Alexander Murray Desha] She was in my class. And up on the Big Island is Helen Jones [Mrs. R. J. Howard] Farrar. And over at Pohai Nani is [John Troup] Jack Moir.

M: I talked to him the other day.

W: You talked to him? He was in the boarding department. Well, looking at the list here there're not too many. There're some that have gone to the mainland that are not here anymore. (recorder is turned off and on again)

Yes, I went all through this when I was writing this book and I had a recorder most of the time that didn't work. (laughter)

M: Okay, let's see. Then after Punahou you went to . . .

W: Oh, my education you're thinking about now. Yes. I went to Sheffield Scientific School which was part of Yale University. In order to go to college in those days, of course, you went by boat and train. That was quite a journey, compared with the flight of airplanes today which go so quickly. I had never been to the mainland since I left it as a small boy. I went on one of the sugar freighters that took the sugar from Honolulu to San Francisco. I think it was the Maui but I'm not quite sure which one it was and it smelled quite a bit of sugar and molasses.

From San Francisco where I had relatives I went north to where my aunt lived in Seattle and then took the Canadian Pacific train. It was a very slow train and had a place where you could cook meals if you didn't want to go to the diner. And then I landed in Chicago; Chicago to New Haven. That was quite an experience for a person coming from Hawaii for the first time.

After three years at Yale, I came back to Honolulu and took some graduate work and got my master's degree in agriculture and chemistry at the University of Hawaii.

M: Yeh, I've got that down here. Graduated in 1922.

W: Well, I actually got my degree although my thesis work was done in 1915-16. In those years.

M: Oh, I see.

W: Honolulu, of course, was in a situation where the World War I was going on in Europe and the submarines and lots of the German pirate boats that were in the Pacific and sometimes they'd come into Honolulu Harbor. I remember that. I was always interested in boats. I'm trying to think of other things that may have happened here in World War I--just before World War I.

I joined the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' experiment station over here on Makiki Street and was assigned to the Island of Hawaii as my particular responsibility because they were conducting experiments. The experiment station at that time was just starting a new policy of putting a young man on every island to have an outside representative working out of (phone rings) Keeaumoku Street. The World War I started and I volunteered, living on the Island of Hawaii at that time, and was sent to the officer's training camp at Schofield Barracks and this was a hundred of us. The veterans of this camp still meet once a year. Not very many of us left but we still meet there.

I'm trying to think of things about Honolulu that might have a little interest. Maybe you might ask some questions there about that period of 1915 to '18 or so.

M: Well, I'd be interested in what the city was like, for instance, the government; what it was doing if anything.

W: Yes, well, [Woodrow] Wilson of course was made president in 1914 [1913] in that period and the first thing he did, on account of his theories on political economy, was to have no duties and sugar, of course, had always been supported by high tariff. So he took off all tariffs and sugar had no tariff and the country was in a terrible--that is, the Territory of Hawaii was in an awful situation



because we were going to be faced with getting our sugar to market and getting a price, which was the world price of sugar, way below what we'd been expecting, so there was a bad depression year 1914-15. But the war changed all of that and the United States had to get their sugar somehow and in order to get it, they had to pay prices in the world market that were high till World War I, so that made quite a difference in the whole economy.

We, of course, had been used to having a Democrat-- we had not been used to having a Democrat as governor and we started off by having, as I remember, [Charles J.] McCarthy. Anyway, we did have a local man to begin with, then they began to send carpetbaggers to us--the Democrats did--for a long time. And then later, before Republicans got in again in the twenties, we began to have local men appointed governors.

M: Let's see. Somewhere in there you met your wife. (laughter)

W: That's right.

M: Can you tell me something about that?

W: Sure. My wife and I had gone to Punahou together. She graduated in the class ahead of me and she went on to Oberlin College to the conservatory of music there. One of the first persons I met on my trips to Hawaii was Alice Bond who lived in Kohala. That was one of the places I had to visit periodically in my plantation trips. During World War I she came to Honolulu quite a bit to do Red Cross work and different other activities so I had an opportunity to see her. When the war was over, I was still in uniform and hadn't been discharged. We were married in 1919 in Kohala.

M: Maybe you could tell me something about your experiences in Hawaii at that time. (to Alice Bond Alexander)

A: Well, we lived in an isolated part of Hawaii, in Kohala. We had to go everywhere by horse and buggy or horseback. And I remember very well we had no ice in those days. If ice was brought at all it came up packed in rice hulls from Honolulu on the steamer. The rice hulls were to keep it from melting but, of course, it did melt to a certain extent anyway. That was a great luxury. Later we had an ice plant, when we had electricity, but we didn't have it at that time. We had kerosene lamps only and I remember as a child we had a living room table that was a little tippy and when there was a hard earthquake someone would yell immediately, "Grab the lamp!" because they were afraid

of fire.

M: You had earthquakes fairly often?

A: Yes, quite often. We didn't have any particular fear, except that I do remember being fearful of fire from the lamps.

M: You know, maybe I should come back and talk to you about your family.

A: No, I don't think I have anything special to talk about.

M: I'm interested in the fact that you went to Oberlin. Were you trained in music here?

A: Yes, at Punahou. It was my Punahou teacher, Miss [Carolyn Louise] Sheffield who was later Mrs. Kenneth Barnes--he was with the pineapple company--who urged me to go to Oberlin, she herself being an Oberlin graduate.

I came back and taught at Maunaolu Seminary on Maui. It was then a school for Hawaiian girls with about eighty girls there at boarding school. My first salary check was forty dollars a month. Then I had my room and board and I paid fifteen dollars to have my laundry done. It was done by one of the girls who was working her way through.

M: What kind of music were you . . .

A: I taught school music in the primary grades.

M: I see. (telephone rings) Maybe you could just quickly give me your. . . . What were you doing in Kohala? Had your parents come from the mainland to work in the plantations?

A: I taught in Kohala my second year; transferred from Maunaolu Seminary to Kohala Girls' School, which was then a boarding school for girls from all over the Island of Hawaii, and they were taught homemaking just the same as the other college did.

M: I see. Well then, you were from Honolulu then. You weren't from Kohala.

A: No, I was born in Kohala.

M: Oh, you were.

A: Yes. [Her grandfather, the Reverend Elias Bond, founded the Kohala Girls' School (Mauna Oliva) in 1874.]

M: And your parents were . . .

A: My father was a physician and he came back to work in Kohala and he worked there as a physician for forty years. I look back on it and I marvel at the things he did. We'd no hospital, no nurse to aid him.

M: Um hm. Wow. Well, had he been born in Hawaii?

A: Yes, both my father [Dr. Benjamin Davis Bond] and mother [Emma Mary Renton Bond] were born in Hawaii.

M: Oh, I see. Boy, you folks really go back, don't you? (laughter) (recorder is turned off and on again)

W: Mrs. Mair should question you a little bit about the missionary complex where you lived in Kohala. This home was one of the few homes where missionaries have lived from the time they arrived. And then after they died, their son Dr. Bond lived there and then Alice's mother and father lived there and she was born there. Very few homes where missionaries lived in were continually lived in for over a hundred years--you could never get it until they moved away--but the home is still maintained.

A: It's still intact. [Named 'Ioli, it was an ahupua'a.]

M: Your grandparents weren't born here?

A: No, my grandparents came from Maine in 1841. He came as a missionary. [The Reverend Elias and Ellen Mariner Howell Bond were members of the Ninth Company and arrived at Honolulu on May 21, 1841.]

M: I see. For some reason I know the name Bond but I didn't --when I was reading about you in Men and Women of Hawaii it didn't dawn on me that you were a Bond from the missionary Bond. Okay. Well, I can look up their names and everything and I can find that.

So your grandparents came and they lived in this house that you mentioned.

A: Yes.

M: And then your parents lived there?

A: Yes, in an addition that was built on to the main house. And that still stands today just the way it used to be.

M: And you were sent from Kohala, then, to Punahou for schooling.

A: Yes. I came when I was twelve years old and in the eighth grade. I came to Punahou boarding department.

M: How often did you get a chance to go home?

A: Well, we always went home at Christmastime, but we didn't go home at Easter because it was so short. We had to be sure that we could get a boat. We'd take any little boat that was running at that time. (Lynda chuckles) If it was the Likeli, which was a very small boat, going up to get sugar or cattle, then we'd take her or we'd take a better boat if that was running on schedule at that time.

M: Then you'd go home for the summer.

A: Yes. But the ship anchored out because it couldn't go up to the landing, of course, and then we'd go down the side of the boat on the gangway and go into a whale boat, which was manned by Hawaiian oarsmen, and we rode in. And when he told us to jump up on the wharf as a wave came in, we jumped and someone up above would catch us and we'd be home. (Lynda chuckles) But from the landing we had to drive ten miles up into Kohala to the district.

(Lynda notes that "some intervening material was apparently not recorded")

#### END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

#### BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

M: Let's start from the beginning so that I can get all of the . . .

W: Yes. Well, these missionaries in the early days were told by the Boston headquarters that they no longer would get any salary from Boston and each missionary would depend on its support from his congregation or from money that he might earn privately. And he'd [William Patterson Alexander] been teaching at the Lahainaluna school--surveying and how to survey land and all--so it was very normal on Maui that he should become a surveyor and he taught his son, William DeWitt Alexander, about surveying.

So when William DeWitt Alexander was asked by King Kalakaua to head a department of surveying in the monarchy, he left Punahou and came to live here on Punahou Street. One of the first jobs he had to do was to locate each island in relation to the other islands. A surveyor uses a method of triangulation and so his son Arthur, my father, was on Diamond Head and he was over on Molokai and they communicated with flashing of mirrors--special mirrors--and that way located the islands as they were, you see.

- M: My gosh, that's quite a distance, isn't it?
- W: I was told that when this work was all done over again about the time of World War II, when the army located the islands and made maps on account of the war, that all this original survey was very accurate and they didn't have to change it very much from what my grandfather had done in the early 1860's. Then later my grandfather was asked to head the Department of Education and that was about the time that he wrote the brief history of the Hawaiian Islands, when he went into the Department of Education. He was employed by Bishop Museum to head up their department which had to do--in those days they didn't call it anthropology, but things that had to do with early Hawaiians and their history. He was working for the museum when he died.
- M: Well, your family then goes back one generation more than I've got. Your great-grandfather was here then.
- W: Yes, and her grandfather. She belongs to a later generation than I do.
- M: I have your grandfather's name and he was William DeWitt.
- W: That's right. William Patterson was my great-grandfather and I'm named for him.
- M: Okay. And William Patterson was the one who originally came here.
- W: As a missionary.
- M: As a missionary. But none of the rest of you became missionaries, right? Or went into the church?
- W: Yes. William Patterson you're talking about now.
- M: Yuh.
- W: Yes, he had a son who was a missionary in the South Pacific--he'd written a book about the South Pacific--and he moved to Oakland, California after he retired as a missionary. His name was James--James Alexander. But he wasn't a missionary in the Hawaiian Islands.
- M: Great-great-uncle?
- W: Yes, that's right. Great-uncle. He'd be a great-uncle.
- M: He was the son of William Patterson.

- W: He was the brother of my grandfather.
- M: Okay. But then, William DeWitt was a surveyor and, later, educator.
- W: Yes, president of Punahou.
- M: And your father was a civil engineer.
- W: Civil engineer and had been a physics professor at University of California and at Yale.
- M: Okay. Where were you folks married?
- A: In Kohala.
- M: In Kohala. At what church?
- A: The [Kalahikiola] Church that my grandfather had built. It was called the Foreign Church because it was built for foreigners--in other words, white people who had come into the district. (Lynda laughs)
- M: I see. And that was the name of it, the Foreign Church?
- A: Yes. Because everything was foreign, of course, in those days. When we had mail from the states, that was foreign mail.
- M: I see. You were a different country over here.
- A: Yes, we were. We were a kingdom.
- M: Let's see, 1919 you were married and that's when you were working here.
- W: I was working in Honolulu and then the war came along and then after the war I continued to work for the experiment station. [Pre-W W I, he worked on Hawaii for the HSPA.]
- M: With your headquarters here [in Honolulu].
- W: With headquarters here. My first position was on the Ewa Plantation on this island. I had charge of all the research on the plantation and also the crop control. That was a new innovation to have someone besides the experiment station to do the experimental work on the plantation and Ewa pioneered in that. Soon after that, practically every plantation had its own research staff in addition to the experiment station.

M: Who was manager?

W: George Renton was manager--George Renton, Jr. (long pause) Then we went to Cuba till the crash of 1929 came and I returned in 1930 and took a position on the Island of Kauai as assistant manager of Grove Farm and held that position until 1953. At that time I was general manager. So I was a sugar man all my life.

M: Maybe you could tell me a little bit about Ewa when you were first there.

W: Well, Ewa is recognized as an ideal place to grow sugar cane. It's very hot and every bit of the water is pumped from the artesian basin and for that reason they never lacked for water, although sometimes it was brackish water but still not too salty so that sugar cane couldn't be grown by it. So here you had all the factors that are needed by nature: bright sun most of the year, very little cloudy weather; you had all the water you needed and you had soil--mainly the soil that had washed down from the Waianae Range--very good soil. Some of it wasn't very deep on account of the coral underneath, but the majority of the soil was probably the most fertile soil in the Hawaiian Islands, so you had practically hothouse conditions to grow cane in. And all we needed was a very good variety. The variety when I went there was failing--it was called Lahaina--and immediately we started to spread a seedling which had been grown at the experiment station, called H-109, and this variety of cane responded very well to these hothouse conditions, so that Ewa was able to produce more per acre than any other plantation at that time.

M: Um hm. Where did you folks live? Did you live in Renton Village, or was it built then?

A: We didn't call it that. We lived along the main road when we first went there. Ewa was very much of an isolated community. The roads were not very good in those days and not very many people had automobiles yet so we came to town by train, did our shopping and carried our packages back with us on the afternoon train that came back to Ewa.

M: My husband grew up at Ewa so I'm very familiar with the plantation. Which one of the houses did you live in along the main road?

A: A house that was quite near the present little church. And then afterwards we moved across the street to the side of the street where the manager's house was. There were three new houses built and we called it Three-House Camp.

(chuckles) It was one of those.

M: Which one was it?

A: The middle one.

M: The middle one? Oh. My husband grew up in the house right next to it; toward Honolulu, you know. There's the three and there's the one next to the manager's.

W: Bob would be your cousin?

M: My uncle-in-law. (laughs)

W: Uncle-in-law. I see.

M: Well, that's interesting.

W: Is your husband in the office at Ewa?

M: My father-in-law was office manager at Ewa.

W: Oh, your father-in-law. Oh, yes.

M: Uh huh, Bucky Mair.

W: Oh yes.

M: Why did you leave Ewa?

W: Well, the real reason was that I thought that I'd like to get out of doing the research work and experimental work and get into administration and there was no opportunity here. A man from Cuba had come to Ewa and had asked me to go to Cuba and look over his plantations and make some recommendations, which I did, and then he asked me to go over there and they called it administrator of these three plantations. They wanted to have irrigation. They had some irrigation but not very much and so they wanted someone that was familiar with irrigation which, of course, I could qualify there.

A: They had 33,000 acres to put into irrigation.

M: Wow. That's quite a project.

W: It was outside the city of Havana about one hundred miles and, as Alice says, it was a large area but each acre didn't produce as much as we do and the cane was harvested every twelve months as against twenty to twenty-four here. And they had oxcarts there.



- A: We had ox carts when we first came to live on Kauai.
- W: Well, they had some ox carts. They had oxen that were pulling the portable track there.
- M: So this was in 1930 you went to Kauai.
- W: So we've seen from ox carts to all the mechanisms. (Lynda laughs)
- M: Okay. Let's see, how's the time holding up?
- W: I think about ten minutes more.
- M: Okay. What was Grove Plantation like when you first went there as compared to Ewa?
- W: Grove Farm was a rather unique plantation in that it did not have its own mill and they contracted with Lihue Plantation to grind the sugar and so all we did was to grow it and send it to the Lihue Plantation. It was also quite different than other plantations in that a family had owned it always from the beginning and that way, although it was a company, it was a family-held company.
- M: It never came under one of the factoring companies then.
- W: American Factors were the agents and previously Hackfeld and Company had been the agents. That part of Kauai had been a Hackfeld area, you might say, and the early people that started the Lihue Plantation were Americans, but shortly after that it became controlled by the Germans, particularly the Isenberg family, so that even in 1914, '15, German was spoken quite commonly in the Lihue district and it was quite a German-oriented plantation. But Grove Farm next door was just the opposite. We were good English-speaking and practically all the people on the plantation, with few exceptions, were not Germans.
- M: The family that you mentioned, the family that actually held the land . . .
- W: Wilcox family.
- M: The Wilcox family held the land.
- W: Held the land and also George Wilcox was responsible for the growing of the cane and he was kind of an over-manager, you might say. Mr. Baldwin was actually the manager before I became manager. [Edward Broadbent, not Mr. Baldwin]  
Have you ever seen Grove Farm Plantation books?

M: No, I know you wrote a history of it.

A: Bob Krauss. He and Bob Krauss wrote it.

M: Wrote it together. (recorder is turned off and on again)

W: Grove Farm was to celebrate one hundred years and they asked not only myself but my wife to research a hundred years of the plantation. They wanted to commemorate the celebration by publishing a book which would tell about a hundred years and I had told them at the beginning that I would not try to be a professional writer but would try to get someone to help me. And it was a very nice association with Bob Krauss and we, together, have produced the book Grove Farm Plantation.

This book is more a biography of George Wilcox, as well as a story of sugar, and one learns how a son of a missionary living on Kauai had very little opportunity and started from scratch until he became a very wealthy man and was one of the great philanthropists in the Hawaiian Islands.

M: It should be good. (long pause)

W: There're many things about the early days there in 1930 on Kauai which are recorded in this history and, of course, the coming of World War II. I think probably the thing that stands most striking in my mind was June 1942 when the battle of Midway was being fought only a relatively short distance from Kauai and we had the airplanes coming from Midway to fuel at Barking Sands on Kauai and we never knew whether the Japanese were going to land on Kauai. And of course, we did hear that they had transports with them, so probably we on Kauai felt that our chances of being invaded were pretty good. And then we were--felt pretty happy when the navy won the battle and the Japanese returned with their losses of many ships from our shores. And the battle of Midway was the turning point of the war.

M: Can you tell me anything about the time when you became a regent of the university?

W: The governor, [Ingram Macklin] Stainback, was the first governor to have the law which required a regent from every island. Previously the regents could be appointed from the other islands but it wasn't obligatory to do it. So they appointed a regent from Kauai and I was the one selected. It was right during World War II when this law went into effect and every month they had meetings of the regents and I came to Oahu in a blacked-out plane. They wouldn't allow a plane to fly between Honolulu and Lihue

or Port Allen unless the windows were blacked-out so you didn't see any of the ships or Pearl Harbor as you came and went.

M: Did you have to come into town then for the regents' meetings at intervals?

W: Very often I tried to make it in one day, just come down in the morning and go back that night, and the regents' meeting would be held at lunch and in the afternoon. (an alarm clock rings, signaling the end of the interview, and Lynda laughs) (Counter at 292, 1st side, 2nd tape)

#### END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

#### BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/3RD TAPE

#### SECOND INTERVIEW

M: What I was thinking, I'd like to ask you, as I was listening to some of the things that you said the last time, I want to go back in more detail about your own family and your own childhood, if we could.

A: Okay.

M: 'Cause we just sort of touched on a few little things that you mentioned--experiences and all--but we didn't really get into your story and I'd like to. . . . Maybe we could start with something in more detail about your parents and your memories of them, what they did, and your brothers and sisters and your growing-up years.

A: Yes. My father was the early physician for the district for miles around up over the hills. He always used horses --carriage and buggy--and a single horse if he wasn't going on long trips, but he had a span--a team of two horses --when he took long trips and most trips were long. And then he always had a white horse that was in a stall nearby, with a saddle ready for him to go out on night calls.

M: He had a white horse so that . . .

A: Well, I expect it was white because of the darkness.

M: Isn't that interesting.

A: I didn't question that when I was a child; we just knew that the horse called Gypsy was always there in the stall at night and all ready.

M: Was your father in private practice?

A: No, he was--well, he was the only one in the district. There wasn't anyone else. He was in private practice and he was also government physician.

M: I see, like public health or something physician. That sort of thing?

A: No, the government physician took care of the Hawaiians free. He was always responsible to the government for looking after the Hawaiians, but he also took care of everybody else in the district and did all sorts of things and I marvel at what he did--with the help he did--because there was no hospital, no nurse.

M: He was it.

A: He was it.

M: What happened when someone got so sick that they couldn't be cared for at home?

A: Well, they had to be. There were occasions--I remember when my grandfather was very ill. He sent to Honolulu for another doctor to come up specially.

M: Were your grandparents in the same neighborhood then, close by?

A: Yes, my Grandmother and Grandfather Renton were quite near. He was manager of a plantation.

M: Which one was that?

A: Union Mill Company. Well, it was absorbed by the Kohala Sugar Company in later years.

M: When you say district that your father had, was that the whole Kohala district?

A: All of North Kohala. Of course we had dirt roads. It wasn't until I was in college, which was the 1911 to '15 period, that my father got his first Model-T Ford, which was a great thing. (Lynda laughs)

M: It must have been.

A: And of course, they didn't have windshield wipers on the cars in those days and he used a plug of tobacco. He didn't chew or smoke but he carried this plug of tobacco

in his car pocket and wiped the windshield with it. I suppose it was the glycerin or something that was in that that helped the water run right down and didn't blind him, you know, as it would if he didn't have anything at all. People somehow got to know that he had it and they swiped it so many times out of the car. (laughter) They wanted it for the tobacco, not for anything else.

M: Did your mother help him with his work at all?

A: Not usually. My mother was at one time school commissioner for West Hawaii. They had a commissioner for each district, with East Hawaii and West Hawaii.

M: Both your parents were college educated then?

A: Yes, my father was an Amherst graduate and then University of Michigan where he took his medical course and graduated there and then took his internship in New York at Bellevue Hospital. And my mother studied at the New England Conservatory of Music but she didn't graduate from there.

M: And then you went ahead and studied music too, as I recall.

A: Yes. Yes.

M: At Oberlin.

A: Yes.

M: Oh. It ran in the family. (chuckles) Your father's family were the Bonds.

A: Yes.

M: And your mother's were the Rentons.

A: Rentons, yes.

M: Both sides go back. The Bonds go way back, as I recall.

A: Yes, 1841.

M: Yeh. And the Rentons don't go back quite that far, do they?

A: No. My grandfather [Renton] was working for the Honolulu Iron Works--he was employed by them--and Mr. Davies--that was Theophilus Davies, the head of the T. H. Davies and Company--sent him up to look at the Union Mill because it had burned and they wanted to see about replacing machin-

ery and whatnot. And then he made a proposition to my grandfather that he and my grandfather buy the plantation, take it over, because Mr. Hind who was manager then decided he wanted to move farther out in the district and didn't want to stay there at Union Mill. So that's how my grandfather came to Kohala.

M: Oh, I see. So then was he, after that, at the plantation as manager?

A: Yes, until he died he was. And the Hind family moved out to Hawi and they had a plantation out there which ran out toward the Mahukona end--Honoipu end--of the district until that was absorbed by Castle and Cooke.

M: So all of those little plantations along there were made into one big one.

A: Yes, there were five of them when I was a child, which meant that there were quite a few white people in the district because each one had a manager and an assistant manager and there was an office force and so forth. But that's the tragedy of today when Castle and Cooke is talking about going out of the district, because it means the whole district is affected from one end to the other.

M: Yeh. Right. Was there a good deal of competition among the plantations?

A: No, they were each a unit and they shipped their sugar. Had to go out in whale boats to a ship that was to take it to the mainland. The Hinds--the Hind family--were connected with the Hind and Rolph Shipping Line, which went out of existence many years ago, but they owned several ships.

W: Can I interrupt you a minute, Alice?

M: Yeh. (recorder is turned off and on again)

A: That was the Rolphs. One of the Rolphs was mayor of San Francisco.

M: Ohh. And they had this shipping line and they went right from--what?--Mahukona?

A: Mahukona to San Francisco.

M: I see, didn't have to go through Honolulu then.

A: No, but you see, the vessels were sailing vessels, they weren't steamers.

M: Did you ever go down and watch that loading process?

A: Yes. Yes.

M: It must have been quite something to see.

A: Yes, it was interesting.

M: Those big old ships are so beautiful, especially in pictures I've seen. I've never, I don't think, actually seen one. I guess the restored one that they've got over here is the only one [the Falls of Clyde].

A: Yes, that's interesting.

M: Well, let's see. We got off on that tangent. (laughter) Well, let's get back. See if I've got it clear now that your grandfather was the manager of Union Mill.

A: Yes.

M: That's on the Renton side.

A: Yes.

M: And the Bond side, your father was a doctor and his father was . . .

A: The missionary that came in 1841.

M: I see. Okay. Maybe we could talk somemore then about your immediate family. Oh, any interesting experiences that you recall as a child or the way you lived. You know, just your way of life.

A: We all went to Kohala until we were ready for seventh or eighth grade. I mean we all went to a public school--walked to school in Kohala--and then, when we were in the seventh or eighth grade, then we came down to Punahou because our school didn't continue any further.

M: What was the name of your school? .

A: It was at Kapaau, a little town where the post office was. That's where the statue of Kamehameha is because Kamehameha was born in the district of Kohala.

M: Oh, the one that was lost?

A: Yes, that was the one that was lost and then put up there in the grounds of the courtyard.

- M: I see. Was this a real small school? How many students when you were there?
- A: Oh, I suppose perhaps about twenty or so.
- M: Twenty, in the whole school?
- A: Yes.
- M: Oh. (laughs)
- A: All the grades together.
- M: And one teacher.
- A: Yes. They called us the select school because we all spoke English. There were other government schools where the work went more slowly because they didn't come from homes where English was spoken.
- M: I see. That would include Japanese workers' families and so forth.
- A: Yes, everybody.
- M: I see. Who was your teacher, do you remember? Or any of your teachers?
- A: Well, there were several that we had but they were from the mainland. In those days the teachers for all the schools came, nearly all of them, from the mainland.
- M: Was that because there was no one locally who qualified?
- A: Yes. I guess our normal school hadn't been developed far enough then.
- M: Uh huh, I see. Did the teachers come down and stay or did most of them . . .
- A: Yes, they'd stay and a great many of them would marry the young men in the district. They always looked forward to seeing the new schoolteachers that came every year.
- W: They called it "The Crop"--"The New Crop." (laughter) I brought here the book that was written by Ethel Damon, Father Bond of Kohala, and this is quite historical. She's given a very good historical picture.
- M: This is your grandfather?



- A: Yes, Bond. He started the girls' school in Kohala. He and his wife both taught the Hawaiians and he started a girls' school so that the girls could be taught homemaking and so forth.
- M: Did you know this grandfather personally?
- A: I was only three when he died. I can just vaguely remember, but . . .
- M: Was he an impressive sort of person?
- A: Yes, yes he was, but he was a very human sort of a person too. The girls came to the Kohala Girls' School and were taught right through the grades from first grade to eighth grade and there were no high schools then. I expect Hilo was the first place to have a high school but there were no high schools beyond that.
- M: What did kids do when they finished school? They went to work?
- A: Well, that was it unless they came to Honolulu.
- M: Would they go to work at the plantations?
- A: Yes, some of them. That was why my grandfather Bond started the Kohala Plantation. All the young Hawaiians were leaving to come to Honolulu. There wasn't anything for them to do so he started it, not as a money-making proposition primarily but to keep the young men; give the young men employment.
- M: That's right, I read something about that. And he came to Honolulu and got someone here interested in financing it.
- A: Yes, Castle and Cooke. Mr. Castle.
- M: Yeh, I read that story somewhere. How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- A: I had three brothers. My brother Kenneth, who was the second one, stayed in Kohala and he put in the first grafted macadamia nut orchard in the Islands. Didn't he? And he worked for the Kohala Sugar Company but on his own he put in this macadamian nut orchard.
- M: Where did he get the idea for that, do you know?
- A: Well, people were beginning to look for macadamian nuts and there weren't very many and he worked with the Univer-

sity of Hawaii and they'd send him grafts from the trees --grafted trees--that were from the best that they were having at their experiment station.

And then my oldest brother, Howell, founded the Territorial Savings and Loan here in Honolulu and my youngest brother, Douglass, was at one time manager of Ewa Sugar Plantation.

M: Hmm. When was that, that he was manager there?

A: I'd have to go and look at the . . .

M: Douglass Bond it was.

A: Yes.

M: And sisters? Did you have any sisters?

A: No, I had no sisters.

M: You were the only girl. Were there children your age in the neighborhood? I can't picture how isolated or not you were.

A: No, we were quite self-sufficient. (Lynda chuckles)  
There were wide areas to cover and gulches to investigate and we walked to school and walked back and played with children there, but otherwise we were self-sufficient. If we wanted to go anywhere we had to go on horseback, which meant catching a horse and saddling it and getting up on it which was sometimes a problem so that in our yard there was a stone fence and there was a little block built way down out so that we could step on that block and then reach the stirrups of the horse.

M: Were you allowed as children to just do that; get a horse and go somewhere if you felt like it?

A: Yes, our parents always knew where we'd be before we were starting. There's a very interesting thing about my father. Not at the beginning, of course, but later there was a telephone operator who worked for the--I think it was the Hawaii Telephone Company then. It wasn't connected with the telephone company here. It was it's little own unit. She was a very well-known Hawaiian girl named Becky and she could look out of her window and see where everyone was going and if they were going down Mahukona, why, that was that. That was called "outside" because it was the outer edge of the district and to go "inside" was to go toward the other end of the district. And she was a very good one for keeping watch about my father. If she

saw him pass then someone needed him for an emergency, why, they'd call Becky and she'd say, "Well, he's gone inside" or "He's gone outside," which meant either way of the district. (Lynda laughs)

M: Uh huh, and then they'd go chase him down if they really needed him.

A: Yes and they'd try to catch him.

M: Did your father have a lot of emergency-type of things, do you recall?

A: Yes, he had everything. Everything on earth, from pulling teeth to . . .

M: Did he ever take any children along with him as helpers?

A: Yes, sometimes we rode with him. And in those days of carriages, we had what they called a boot, which was a piece of oilcloth that came up and attached to the two sides of the car and there was a place where the hands went through to hold the reins when it was pouring with rain. He could manage the horses that way and look over the top of it.

M: Oh, I see. (laughs)

A: But it wasn't so easy on the little ones sitting next to him. We couldn't see out so we just sat until we got somewhere.

M: You mentioned that you walked to school. How far would that have been?

A: About a mile. Children wouldn't want to walk that far these days, but it was fun for us when the children who walked a little farther from the Kohala Sugar Plantation would meet us on the government road. We'd walk down the gulch below our house and then onto the plantation road--cane road--and then onto the government road. When we got to the government road, we often met other children coming, going the same way for the same reason.

M: Uh huh. Were you in school all day?

A: Yes. Yes. We took our lunch and stayed all day.

M: Were you the youngest in your family?

A: No, I was the second, but I'm the only one living at the

moment.

M: Do you folks have children? I don't think we've talked about that.

A: Yes, we have two sons living. [W. P., Jr. and Henry A.]

M: Did your brothers have children?

A: Yes, they all did.

M: So there's another generation.

A: Yes.

M: But not with the Bond name.

A: Well, one Bond at Territorial Savings and Loan is my nephew. He followed his father. His father was the first of the Territorial Savings and Loan.

M: Is there a Hazel Bond?

A: Yes, she's my sister-in-law. She was Howell Bond's wife. [Benjamin Howell Bond married Hazel Beatrice Hoffman.]

M: I see. I came across her name and I just wondered if that was . . .

A: Yes, she's very much interested in the D.A.R. [Daughters of the American Revolution].

M: Oh really.

A: Yes.

M: She's not local then.

A: She came from New York originally to visit her sister, who was Mrs. Edna Moore, and then she stayed, taught school in Waialua, and then married my brother. She's lived here ever since.

W: This is a suggestion. (recorder is turned off and on again)

M: Let's see. I wanted to ask you about the basic necessities of life when you were a child. Did your folks grow your food?

A: Well, some of it we grew, but we had a steamer once a week

that came from Honolulu and it would bring mail.

M: Where did it come to?

A: Mahukona. Then they had a long trek up to the district-- about ten miles.

M: Would they bring it in a buggy or something?

A: Yes, in a cart.

M: And it brought food too?

A: Yes. The meat was local meat because there were ranches around Kohala. There were several in my day but they've been absorbed by the ranches over toward Kamuela-Waimea.

M: So you got along pretty well.

A: Yes, and we had our own cows and we had a lame Hawaiian man who always milked the cows and brought the milk down to us and it was put in big pans. I remember seeing the cream taken off it. This was a very interesting old Hawaiian man because the church that my grandfather had built for the Hawaiians was quite near us and this old milkman rang the church bell at New Year's time. Well, I guess he did at other times too, but particularly at New Year's time, I remember, because we'd be wakened in the night with the bell and it would toll and very slowly ring and it was tolling out the old year. And then all of a sudden it would just go jangle-jangle-jangle and we knew the new year was there 'cause all was well. He was joyfully ringing in a new year.

M: Uh huh. That's interesting.

A: We had some very fine taro patches near us and the poi men in our day were Chinese who had taken over from the Hawaiians more and they had a poi factory and whenever there was fresh poi they ran up a white flag, so that when my brothers were growing up and their shirt-tails stuck out we always yelled at them, "Poi flag!" (laughter)

M: Did you folks eat poi regularly?

A: Yes. Yes. We all grew up with it.

M: When you say poi factory, how automated was it? Were they still pounding the taro by hand?

A: No, no. They put it through a sort of machine but it had

to be peeled and then thrown in and then went through this machine.

M: I see. Were there other little businesses around the community?

A: Yes, the little stores that grew up just to fill in people's needs. They kept staples like rice and sugar and canned goods.

M: Did you have anything like a police department or a fire department?

A: Yes, yes. Not fire in those days but we did have a police department, but I don't think it was kept very busy as far as I knew. (Lynda chuckles)

W: At least you hadn't been there. You haven't been there?

M: To Kohala? No, I haven't unfortunately.

W: Yes, well, geographically it's about as isolated as any community is and at one side you have the cliffs that are inaccessible going towards Hilo and Hamakua so you can't go that way except by boat. And then on the other direction--Kawaihae and Waimea--the only way in the early days to reach that was going over the mountains. Quite a climb over the mountains and down into Waimea, you see. So they were, as Alice has said, quite sufficient unto themselves because they were so isolated.

M: How did you get to Hilo or did you ever go?

A: Well, we didn't go. It was very difficult to go unless you went by horseback, which is a long, long journey. But before I went away to college, my mother thought I ought to see the volcanoes so I went up in the steamer that put in at Mahukona. Always coming from Honolulu, the steamer would touch at Kawaihae and then come to Mahukona and then go on to Hilo. And then she'd just reverse things as she came back. So I went up to Hilo on a steamer and then up to the volcano.

The steamer did just the reverse when we were coming back to Punahou. She picked up all the children who had come into Hilo from along the Hamakua Coast and from Hilo. They were always on board and it took them till late toward evening to get to Mahukona. Then we always greeted each other wildly. Then she'd stop and pick up a few at Kawaihae and then go straight across to Maui and pick up the Maui children. So we stayed up about all night, the nights on our way back to school, to greet each new group

as they came on board and it was lots of fun. (Lynda laughs)

M: I'll bet. How often did you get to go home?

A: We didn't go home for Easter because that was only a week but we went home at Christmastime and in the summertime.

M: Was it a hard thing to get used to, going away? You said in seventh grade you went.

A: I went in the eighth grade. My brother went in the seventh grade. No, no. It was always exciting at the Punahou boarding department because there were children from all over the Islands. It was really a fine thing because we grew to know so many people.

M: Um hm. Yeh, especially when you're in such an isolated circumstance.

A: Yes, and the Punahou boarding department was going full steam in those days. They don't have any now. I guess we don't have quite so many problems as have developed with the modern days.

M: I'm sure. (chuckles) What year did you graduate?

A: I graduated in 1911 from Punahou.

M: And then you went straight from there to Oberlin.

A: Yes, um hm. You have a good memory.

M: (chuckling) Not really. I sometimes feel very confused when I've listened to so many different stories, you know, and some of them overlap considerably and I'll get one person's facts attached to the wrong person.

Let's see, I had a question in mind. Well, I guess it's gone. (long pause) Oh, I know. I wanted to ask you about the . . .

END OF SIDE 1/3RD TAPE

Go ahead.

A: Well, I can remember the men who worked for us had pig-tails in those days but one by one they came off. I can remember one man in particular. He just hated to part with his long queue.

M: Why did they feel that they should part with it?

- A: Well, I don't know. I guess it just sort of got to be the fashion not to have them anymore. They're easier to take care of because they were long queues that wound around their heads and where they ended they were tied together, so it was quite a long braid that they had. Not so thick, as I remember, but still a queue.
- W: Practically all the women had their feet bound too, didn't they?
- A: Well, not the ones that worked. The higher class ones did but the ones who worked, worked around and worked bare-footed but in Chinese costume, you know, like loose pants and then an over-jacket.
- M: Were the Chinese in your community household help or did they run stores?
- A: Yes, quite a few. A great many of them were household help and then it began to get harder to find and then we had Japanese help later.
- M: You mean the women who came here were still binding their feet?
- A: Well, the older ones were. Not the ones that came as--I suppose they belonged to what you'd call the coolie class. But they were very fine people and a great many of them who grew up there in Kohala had become people of consequence in the community.
- M: Um hm. Yeh. Well, let's see. Is there anything else about your childhood? Can you remember any big exciting events? For instance, how did you celebrate Christmas?
- A: Well, our Christmas tree was an ironwood tree usually and I do remember, of course, there were candles. People are so fearful of fire these days that they're very careful but we didn't have electricity, we just had the candles. I remember one Christmas we had a little cart which was the first cart in the district. It had four wheels and it was low and drawn by one horse. Our minister and one of the teachers from the Kohala Girls' School, which we called The Seminary, drove down the lane in this cart. He was dressed as Santa Claus and she as Mrs. Santa Claus. So I remember that was a hilarious time.
- Our family was very large because it was not only the Bonds, but it was the Rentons and the Hinds, and we all gathered together for holidays and good times so there was a great number of us. I remember once my Uncle Henry Renton was playing Santa Claus at my Grandmother Renton's



home. He was to climb in the window but he got stuck with his bag in the window so they had a hard time pushing him through, which was a very hilarious occasion. (laughter)

M: I'll bet.

A: But everything was very simple in those days.

M: What kind of a dinner would you have for Christmas?

A: Oh, a long, long table. I don't think people have such long tablecloths anymore but we always did. The children sat with the grownups. We weren't segregated as much as children are these days and Grandfather always served the littlest one first, 'cause he knew they'd get the wiggles if he didn't. (laughter)

M: Right. What kind of dishes did you have? The same sort of things that we have now?

A: Yes, just the same as we have now. Some of them were very choice, you know, because of their age. I think I'm exhausted. (chuckles)

M: I've exhausted you.

A: No, you haven't but I can't remember other things. I wish I'd been more alert and had asked more questions as a child. We took so much for granted because we didn't see contrasts.

M: Yes, right. It was the only way people lived as far as you were concerned. (chuckles)

A: Yes.

M: Looking back, well, to me it's very exotic really, you know, because it's just completely strange.

A: Yes.

M: I grew up in the country but it was on the mainland and a whole different thing.

A: Yes.

M: (to Mr. Alexander) Well, I was hoping maybe, since I talked to you last time, you maybe remembered some of your plantation experiences in more detail or anything that might have come to you that we didn't already cover.

W: Well, that's right. The war in Europe had just started when I entered the sugar industry and graduated from Yale and then took my master's degree at the University of Hawaii. While I was at the university I used to work part-time on Makiki Street at the experiment station and they asked me to become a full-time member of the experiment station when I was through at the University of Hawaii. I went to the headquarters on Makiki Street of the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] but they assigned me to the Island of Hawaii and I was there until World War I started.

My responsibilities were to conduct research on all the different plantations under the guidance of the Honolulu office, so I went all the way from Naalehu around Hilo coast, Hamakua Coast and Kohala--in that whole area. I had a Model-T Ford. The roads were pretty awful but I managed to get by. It took a long time. The roads wound and sometimes they were muddy and you got stuck. You didn't have demountable rims. You had to change your tires and put the tube in and all if you had tire trouble, which was quite often, but it was surprising how the Model-T did get you there.

One thing I'll always remember is that the Honokaa road going up over the mountain to Waimea was very steep and the gasoline supply was under your seat and there was no fuel pump and sometimes the gasoline would not flow into the carburetor unless you backed up. (Lynda laughs) So when you came to this steep hill, you would go in reverse in order to have the gasoline flow down to the carburetor. People don't remember that about Model-T's but they were a great invention.

M: Yeh. Well, they were really an improvement over horses then, you would say.

W: Oh yes. Yes.

M: You said you went around from one plantation to another doing experiments. What sort of thing was that?

W: Yes, well, the experiments that we conducted were mainly of two types. Probably most important was the one in the propagation of new varieties and laying out experiments which compared the new varieties with the old ones and finding a better variety and we were very successful in that and one reason that the sugar yields improved.

M: Did you sort of tailor the variety to the particular . . .

W: Environment.

M: The plantation soil and water.

W: Yes. You see, most of the plantations start pretty close to sea level and they run up on the side of the mountains to as high as two thousand feet and so you had a wide range of climatical conditions that you had to fit your variety to.

The other form of experiment had to do with fertilizer. Fertilizer had been used by the plantations over the years, but not very scientifically. One thing we discovered, that you could apply larger quantities and the larger quantities would give you returns for your investment and we had to determine what the limits were and also the best time to apply the fertilizer was very important. And that hadn't been given too much consideration in the early days. And also, we found the importance of the different elements in the fertilizer, whether it was nitrogen, potash, or phosphoric acid. Some plantations needed only nitrogen and potash and they could get along without phosphoric acid, but no plantations could get along without nitrogen. That was the very important element and we had to be very careful in the nitrogen that we didn't over-fertilize because we could apply too much nitrogen and the cane would grow very fast, but the sugar content would be low. And that was a very ticklish point, to apply enough but not too much.

M: Did they put it on with the irrigating water. Is that how they did it?

W: You see, on the Island of Hawaii there's almost no irrigation and in those days Kohala had a little, Hamakua had a little, but the rest of Hawaii was all unirrigated. So that the years of drought and the years when they had too much rainfall, some places it would always seem to be a feast or a famine. They never had just the right amount of rainfall. Hilo, of course, was the wettest spot and the plantations in that district never suffered for lack of water. It rained almost every day and the total amount in a year's time was almost unbelievable to many people. That would be 200 to 250 inches of rain in a twelve-month's period.

M: Who were some of the people that you worked with at the experiment station? Do you remember anything about them?

W: Well, they were a very pioneering group of scientists in the different departments, 'course my department being agronomy and agriculture, and the boss that I was directly responsible to was Agee and he had come from Louisiana. [H. P. Agee] I think that probably was a French name.

And that was many generations back in Louisiana and he'd been educated in the sugar schools of Louisiana before he came to Hawaii to head the experiment station.

M: Did the experiment station have different departments then? You'd have chemists and agronomists and botanists?

W: Yes. Probably the department that accomplished the most in those days was the department of entomology. Our insects were very bad and one part of Hawaii, in the Kau district, they threatened one year to wipe out the whole crop--the leaf hopper. This leaf hopper seemed to grow faster and multiply faster than anywhere else in the world because there were no natural enemies of the leaf hopper. At night there would be clouds obscuring the sun, there'd be so many flying. They sent the scientists--entomologists--to other parts of the world to find the natural enemies of the leaf hoppers and some of the scientists were from England where entomology was well-developed, more so than later in the United States. These entomologists were very successful in finding the natural enemies of the leaf hopper and then the job was, how do you get them to Hawaii without their dying on the way? And they learned to have stations where they raised them maybe two or three times before they got to Hawaii so that when they got here they could be liberated and spread. And before very long--only a few years--the natural enemies had wiped out most of the very bad pests. We still had them but they were under control due to the . . .

M: Any other kinds of insects?

W: Besides leaf hoppers?

M: No, that they brought in that were the natural enemies of others?

W: No, they were very careful to limit it to the natural enemies and they were not only the leaf hoppers but they were the different worms that were in the ground. And then also, worms and flies that enjoyed the sugar cane and one of them, the cane borer, was very bad until they got the natural enemy of the cane borer. People nowadays have to take for granted that the natural enemy of all these bad pests are here and don't realize what happened to people having to go into the jungles of New Guinea or someplace in Africa or Asia when living conditions were terrible and where they got very ill from typhoid fever or whatever it was in order to bring to Hawaii these natural enemies.

Is that what you wanted informationally?

M: Yes. Yes.

W: Of course, all that information is written up in libraries and all, but those of us that were connected with the industry now are getting fewer and fewer, of course, and you don't find many like myself that went through that experience.

M: Yeh, right. Did you know Freddie Biven? [Fedrico O.]

W: Yes. Yes. Freddie Biven and I were at the experiment station when World War I started and Freddie Biven joined the ambulance corps that was being recruited. This is now before the United States went into the war. Under the French, this ambulance corps was. I joined the group of young men that went to Schofield Barracks. There were a hundred of us that were in the officers' training camp. We have a reunion every year and we're down to about a dozen living in Hawaii now. Some are on the mainland. I don't know just how many, but there're not very many of us left.

I could, of course, talk at great length on the early days in the sugar industry and the changes that have occurred.

M: Could you recount some of your own experiences?

W: Well, I think that as far as the Island of Hawaii goes, that my contact with the pioneers that were there and people that had been in the industry when I arrived and all, the managers of the different plantations were, contrary to what the union tries to say about them, very fine men. There were exceptions but for a period there, the turn of the century and from that period on, they were very humanitarian people and they treated their laborers very well. (coughs) Most of the laborers were Japanese. The Chinese were no longer on the plantations in large numbers anyway and the Filipinos were just starting.

The Hawaiian Islands, when we became an integral part of the United States, there was a law excluding the importation of Orientals and that law prevented the bringing in of any laborers that might be Chinese or Japanese. So we had to have more laborers and we went to the Philippines for them and eventually we got laborers that came from Ilocano as against the laborers that came from the cities around Manila. These Ilocanos were very fine workers and very good people. Most of them were given contracts where they would only stay in the Islands so many years and then would have free passage back to their homeland, but a lot of them did not want to go home and wanted to stay and raise their families here in the Islands and that is why

we have this large group of Filipinos in our midst, both in the plantations and in the cities.

In Hawaii transportation was quite a problem and that had to be solved mainly by different labor-saving devices and that is a story in itself. These slopes of the mountains, which go up Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, and the lava flows all have made certain problems which had to be overcome.

M: Uh huh. Were they still using carts to haul cane when you started on the plantation?

W: (coughs) Oh yes. On the Island of Hawaii the oxcarts had practically disappeared. I should mention--most people don't realize nowadays--that wherever possible the cane was flumed to the mill and these flumes were the large system of permanent flumes, and then portable flumes were put in temporarily at harvest time. The cane was cut into short lengths and piled close to the flumes--the temporary flumes--and these flumes would take the cane many times over trestles and over valleys--long distances--to the factory. On Sunday some of us would get kind of daring and put big bundles of cane trash in the flume and then take a ride down in the flume to the mill, hoping to get out before it struck the end of the flume. (Lynda chuckles) But it was quite a stunt to take a ride on the flumes particularly when you went over these high trestles where the valleys were.

M: It must have been just plain dangerous, huh?

W: Well, we didn't think much of it but I suppose a person would think that there was a risk involved there. 'Course every once in awhile a child would get into one of these flumes--a little baby--and would be swept down in them, just like in the irrigation ditches on an irrigated plantation.

M: Did the water come from the mountains, then, to the flume?

W: Yes, there wasn't very much difficulty in damming up the streams, except in the dry areas you'd have a harder time, but in the wet areas there was plenty of water in the mountains.

M: And you'd just dam up the stream temporarily?

W: Small dam in the stream and then that would divert the water into the flume--into the main flume.

M: Um hm. And then when you were through harvesting, you'd

un-dam the . . .

W: Yes. Some of the other plantations that didn't have flumes would depend on mules to take them and some of them even had steam engines that pulled the cart, but not very many by the time I was along. That was the time before that.

Of course, it wasn't till a good many years later that the so-called crawler or caterpillar-type of engine was found and all of these wet plantations had a very difficult time with the wheel-type because they would get mired down in the mud.

M: When did you actually start working on a plantation?

W: That was 1915.

M: I see, and you did your work for the experimental station.

W: At that time, yes.

M: Yeh. Okay. And then the first plantation you actually worked on, in which you were employed by the plantation.

W: Was Ewa.

M: Was Ewa and that was in 1920 or something, you told me?

W: Yes, early 1920. That was quite a different environment than anything on Hawaii because Ewa was one hundred per cent irrigation and the rainfall there in a year that you didn't have the southerly or Kona storms, the amount of rainfall was very little and cane had to have water supplied by the artesian wells, which was pumped onto the cane fields. There was no water at Ewa that came from the mountains, which made it quite different than most plantations, even the irrigated plantations like Maui where they had mountain water brought in and Kauai where they had mountain water brought in. And parts of Oahu where mountain water was brought in.

M: Yeh. Well, you told me some of your experiences at Ewa.

W: Yes, I think I did mention that they had a very good department, which they called agricultural control and research, and we were in the agricultural control and research department with the operating men, working very closely.

M: That was the department you worked in.

- W: Yes. (coughs) I think that we pioneered this idea of a sugar plantation having its own department and not depending on the experiment station. Pretty soon every plantation had such a department.
- M: You were head of the one at Ewa.
- W: That's right.
- M: And who was the manager when you went?
- W: The manager was Mr. George Renton, Sr. and he just retired and his son, George Renton, Jr., took over and so I worked under George Renton, Jr. for many years.
- M: And what relative was that of your wife's?
- W: He was a first cousin of my wife's.
- M: I see.
- W: His father and my wife's mother were brother and sister.
- M: Let's see. Then you went to Kauai and . . .
- W: By way of Cuba. (laughter)
- M: That's right, yeh.
- W: Yes. I had had several visitors at Ewa from Cuba, also Peru and others, that had come to see how we did things and the one from Peru wanted me to go down there and I didn't think that was very attractive. And the one from Cuba said, "Well, you come and visit us and make a report on our operations," which I did. And after I made the report, he said, "Well, we'd like to employ you and have you leave Hawaii and go to Cuba." I resisted it for quite a while until he made me a very flattering offer and it was for three years; wouldn't be forever.

END OF SIDE 2/3RD TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

Note: The HSPA experiment station fronts on Keeaumoku Street and has its back door on Makiki Street.



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## THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.